



Trans-Lake Washington Project

Washington State
Department of Transportation
Sound Transit

Public Input For Weeks of March 12 to 21, 2001

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Project

Comment: Wanted to note discrepancy between times on the brochure and postcard for March 6th & 8th open houses.

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Project

Comment: From the Madison Park area. Would like to know the best timeframe for spending two hours at the MOHAI open house.

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, mitigation/enhancements, impacts, tunnel, and interchanges.

Comment: Express my utmost surprise and disappointment, and actually extreme disapproval of a plan that is going to expend the SR 520/I-5 interchange on Eastlake. Eastlake is already a neighborhood being endangered by its location. If a tunnel is put in, it will destroy this neighborhood. Eastlake has suffered enough for the city. It is a really silly idea. That would destroy a historic neighborhood and negatively impacting the life all around it. Calling to urge, to not go ahead with the plan.

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, and interchanges.

Comment: Lives on East Boylston. Felt the road is already noisy enough. Will fight to the end of his life to ensure that this road is not destroyed and noise is not increased. Would like more information. Would like to talk to someone. Will contact all the city council members, senators, and representatives. Redmond is not that important to ruin the Eastlake neighborhood and his livelihood that he has spend 38 years trying to enjoy.

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, interchanges, and project.

Comment: Work conflict does not allow her to attend the March 6th open house. Very, very concerned about what she is hearing from her neighborhood about: taking parts of the Eastlake neighborhood and the south end. Would like to provide substantive comments on the alternatives and options. Is there a way she can take a look at the plans? Community briefing scheduled for March 21st- concerned that this is too far down the road. Please call her ASAP to let her know where or when she can review the different options. Or is it alright to wait until the community meeting on the 21st?

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Project.

Comment: Please mail him 10 brochures. He would like to distribute them to others in Medina. He got the Trans-Lake contact information from a Medina City Council member. Address is: 8400 NE 7th Street, Medina, WA 98039

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Project.

Comment: Attended the MOHAI open house. Would like copies of various design alternatives that were available on large displays.

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 12, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, general-purpose lanes, and HOV lanes

Comment: Best solution to the mess is to add two SOV lanes each way. Compromise would be a SOV lane and a HOV lane. He doesn't think it works. Can't shut down the majority of people who are paying taxes. Just adding an HOV lane would be a total waste of money. I-405 in Renton is a proven failure. People who are paying taxes deserve to use the new facilities.

Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, transit, mitigations/enhancements, transit, HCT, bicycle/pedestrian lanes, and lid.

Comment: West of I-405 Comment:

Reconnecting the communities is great. But the lids west of 92nd and east of Evergreen Point Road need to be longer. Your assumptions about topography are incorrect, and you should re-evaluate. Use half lids where appropriate on relatively steep side grades. Noise is our biggest problem (along with cut-through traffic and community separation). Please concentrate on reducing noise. As to location of bus stops and transit, why don't we consolidate everything at 84th along with convenient parking and drop off area. 84th is the only major arterial other than Bellevue Way NE and we should focus there to keep traffic out of neighborhoods. Rail has to be underground, if anywhere. I would also like a small basketball court (we have plenty of tennis courts already) on top of the lids. Skip the parking we don't need to draw commuters into the neighborhood. Bike trails are good, with access clear across the bridge to the University of Washington and Burke Gillman. Keep working on the lids. They are necessary for our communities. Thanks.

Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, mitigations/enhancements, lid, and interchanges.

Comment:

1. Lay out a plan for elimination of the "weave" on I-5 to facilitate traffic from Mercer Street getting to approach as to SR 520.
 2. If the neighborhoods involved are blocking progress then pursue the "lid" possibilities (as was done on Mercer Island), build a side-by-side bridge at SR 520 and get leadership to move on this!!
 3. See if the coalition Legislative Transportation Initiative is likely to pass and meld it with this plan.
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Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, mitigations/enhancements, lid, and HCT.

Comment: Renderings with more extensive lidding were encouraging. Lid should extend from Evergreen Point Road to 92nd in order to protect homes near freeway from noise and pollution. High Capacity Transit Light Rail should be under the lid, not on top of the lid.

Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, mitigations/enhancements, impacts, transit, tolls, interchanges, lid, HOV lanes, HCT, right-of-way, and public involvement.

Comment:

1. The goal should be to lid as much of the SR 520 Corridor as financially possible.
2. Although the costs I believe would be prohibitive, the idea of sinking the SR 520 span below the surface of the lake would be a wonderful accomplishment for the **long-term livability** of the greater Seattle area.
3. I like the idea of creating a small commercial component in the immediate vicinity of 23rd and SR 520.
4. I'm for restoring tolls on SR 520 to help finance needed improvements. Tolls may also encourage more people to use free public transit (if Collins plan is adopted?).
5. Reducing traffic at 23rd and SR 520 should get top priority. Look for ways to reroute traffic.
6. A different approach to integrating SR 520 with I-5 is desperately needed to eliminate the traffic clogging and dangerous weave between SR 520 and Mercer Street. HOV lanes from SR 520 should integrate directly into the I-5 express lanes.
7. Sound Transit is a dead duck and should be dismissed from the planning process as soon as possible.

I support adding two HOV lanes to the SR 520 Corridor, which hopefully can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way. I would appreciate receiving notice of upcoming meetings with more advance notice. I received notice of the last meeting at the Museum of History and Industry not much more than a week prior to the meeting. I was not able to attend.

Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, mitigations/enhancements, transit, bicycle/pedestrian lanes, TDM, and HCT.

Comment: Trans-Lake Washington Designers:

I am a resident of the Eastlake Community for 30 years. My greatest concern with the SR 520 project is that there is no further capacity in the city for more cars. Eastlake Avenue is an excellent example. During rush hour traffic backs up on Eastlake from the University Bridge all the way through our community to south Lake Union. If you increase the number of cars that arrive in Eastlake and other similar communities where will they go? Where will they park?

Our 7 to 9 and 4 to 6 reversible lanes on Eastlake Avenue increase the traffic load and encourage cars (when they can) to drive through our community at 40 and 50 miles per hour. These cars are only a few feet from pedestrians on the sidewalks. Eastlake Avenue is our main shopping and pedestrian street. Having traffic right up to the curbs creates an unpleasant pedestrian environment. We want Eastlake to be more like Broadway not more like Aurora Avenue. Bringing more cars into the city will surely bring more problems to our over crowded streets. If a new bridge increases the number of autos entering the city, congestion will also increase. Increased auto capacity is not a solution it creates more of the problem.

Your literature states that by 2020 it will take 47 minutes to commute from the east side to north Seattle. Only when people become inconvenienced by commuting will they use the personal alternatives that they have available. I would rather force commuters out of private autos and into alternate forms of transportation than have cars force me off the streets of my community.

More public transportation, light rail, heavy rail, busses, bike ways, and more inviting pedestrian environments are better solutions than more lanes of traffic into the city. **Please do not increase auto capacity into Seattle. Please do increase the transportation alternatives for commuters.**

Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, mitigations/enhancements, north bridge, general-purpose lanes, transit, bicycle/pedestrian lanes, and TDM.

Comment: Your recent direct mail piece outlined the problems, what you have heard and what you have considered. Here are my thoughts.

1. Whatever you do will create screams of agony from the NIMBYs. It seems therefore that you must take your courage in your hands and propose a real solution.
 2. The traffic between the eastside and Downtown is going to continue to grow unless we establish some draconian prohibitions and walls to enforce them.
 3. People are not going to give up their private auto without a pitched battle. It is too comfortable and convenient, which mass transit is not.
 4. We must plan for more cars crossing the Lake.
 5. A third separate bridge will destroy too much- the Lake, and the communities upon which it intrudes.
 6. This means sticking to the existing SR 520 Corridor and increasing the capacity.
 7. Spreading wider for more capacity will be completely unacceptable to the surrounding communities.
 8. The logical solution appears to me (although not a popular solution) to be double decking the existing bridge.
 - a. Continue four lanes on the existing lower level that are one way.
 - b. Build a wider second level to accommodate four lanes of autos the other way, plus one transit only lane and two lines of light rail.
 - c. The footprint will not be much greater than the existing, so communities bordering SR 520 will have a reduced impact. Much of the line runs through declivities, so a second level will not have significant visual impact. The upper level could be roofed with parkland and walking/biking paths.
 9. No question this is an expensive solution, but it resolves several esthetic objections, which tend to be highly emotional and most problematic to resolve.
- I wish you well.
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Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, and HCT.

Comment: [Submitted an article]. Reading Saturday March 3rd Eastside Journal “Opinion” section management is “basis for land decisions” Ron Sims and Louise Miller say they have drawn a line between urban and rural – on the “land use plans” our state requires. I can see that. However they have forgotten or left out “suburban” I don’t believe you can do that with any common sense--- In the same way you are looking at transportation across the lake. If you look east of the lake and try to foresee where the people are living or expanding to (suburban) you will see Redmond is going to be the largest population growth area (Whether you like it or not, that is the available land). So if you come west from Redmond to Seattle see what the shortest distance is (the center of Redmond to I-5) that is the problem—SR 520 is over-used—and as you quoted before has only 10 years of life left in it. If you go from Redmond through Kirkland via Redmond Way central way across the Lake through Magnuson Park on 65th or a major street to I-5, I believe you would split the traffic from SR 520 and around the north end of the Lake relieving traffic on both and by all means do transit on the new bridge-be it more rail type busses or light rail. But consider them.

The SR 520 Corridor has been studied at least 506 different times with No Action it is time to do something. Portland, Oregon doesn’t seem to have a problem building a bridge or providing transportation with out 10-20 year studies. No more of this 30-year pay off to a general contractor for building a bridge. Lets just do it. The gas tax we have been paying in this state for the results we have leave a no confidence vote for the DOT. Add state general funding, the whole thing is a disgrace to the state and the state DOT. Should figure out what needs to be done, talk to the legislation, and do it.

Source: Mail

Date of Comment: March 15, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, impacts, mitigations/enhancements, transit, general-purpose lanes, and TDM.

Comment: Re: Comments on materials presented at March 6 Open House at MOHAI

1. Comments on proposed alternatives.
 - a. Any corridor widening project must be coupled with SOV restrictions.
 - b. The intrinsic efficiency of regional bus service must be improved.

In my letters to the TLWP of July 18 and August 1 last year I commented on the complexity of our current bus system, and the negative effect that complexity has on ridership. Metro and Sound Transit currently have over 200 routes, and Metro’s bus schedules change every four months. Transit planners present at the July 19 meeting in Medina stated that **the current utilization of bus services is three percent**, i.e., 3 of 100 trips is made by bus. In my Aug. 1 letter I showed that a trip from Mill Creek to Pioneer Square on a Monday morning takes 2 hr. and 44 minutes on three buses. These comments represent some of the kinds of problems we have with today’s bus services.

While I support the development and greater utilization of bus mass transit, I question the likely effectiveness of various construction alternatives oriented toward improving bus mobility

along the corridor when **there is no mention among any of the ten planning alternatives of the need for improvement in the intrinsic efficiency of bus services.** In other words, an expensive construction project to add lanes is likely to have little impact on congestion unless people are persuaded that it's easier and more beneficial to use busses.

Please consider the people who live along the SR 520 corridor. These good people live along a modern day "commons" that is being "overgrazed" by people who do not live along the corridor. Yet those who live along the corridor, and their surrounding environment, will be those most highly penalized by construction projects to widen the corridor. This situation was very eloquently established at the scoping meetings last summer. To balance the scales of fairness, there must be a quid pro quo. Therefore, any corridor construction project alternative must be coupled with restriction on SOV use. This is a very fair tradeoff because SOV users, not corridor residents, are mainly responsible for corridor congestion in the first place.

So I recommend that **any construction project to widen the SR 520 corridor must also be coupled with restrictions on SOV use.** At a minimum, the restriction should be three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. A restriction for twelve hours should also be considered. We need to start making it clear that driving alone to and from work is socially unacceptable behavior in a congested urban environment and actually tantamount to committing an environmental or public health crime. Those who insist on driving alone should be able to purchase SOV licenses, and certain workers or vehicles, such as taxicabs, should have SOV exemptions.

Just considering the grisly prospect of a corridor widening project to relieve congestion, **it would actually make more sense to impose an SOV restriction *first*, before any construction project is undertaken!** Such a restriction would allow us to evaluate the non-SOV state of congestion on the corridor. Removing SOVs might remove the need for construction. If the planning committee is indeed happy with current bus service, there should be no real objection to protecting the "commons" with SOV restrictions aimed toward increasing bus ridership.

However, consider the following bus travel times from N. 95 St. and Aurora Avenue North (my neighborhood) to various Eastside destinations, based on a 638 am departure from the bus stop:

Bellevue Square: 66 min., two buses

Larry's Market, Totem Lake: 74 min., two buses

Microsoft campus, Redmond: 65 min., three buses (This is double the SOV driving time quoted in your information titled "Puget Sound Congestion.")

As you can see, commuting by bus from the North End to major Eastside destinations involves actual travel times that range from just over 2 hours to approx. 2.5 hours, roundtrip, for commuter each work day. Allowing for time spent waiting for the first bus each way, congestion, or missed transfers, the actual commute ranges from 2.5 hours to 3 hours. **By driving, the commuter is able to save over an hour a day vs. taking the bus,** based on your own data (travel time from Redmond). By restricting SOV access to SR 520 during rush hour, we change the economics of the situation in favor of taking the bus. **By making it easier to use SR 520 by adding lanes, with no restriction on SOV use, people will continue to drive because of time and convenience factors, and the massive construction project will have made no significant impact on congestion!**

Personally, I'm not happy with the Greenwood to Eastside travel times. They are pretty good for the kind of bus system we have now, but they are not nearly fast enough to persuade people to leave their cars. I continue to advocate for the development of a bus system that enables people to go anywhere in five stops or less on no more than two vehicles. As I said in the scoping meeting last July 19, the TLWP should offer a planning alternative that recommends improving the quality of bus service, not just quantity.

I now understand that an analysis of the bus system is not within the purview of the TLWP, but, nevertheless, it would be appropriate to make a "side recommendation" that improvements in bus system quality need to be made. The bus system needs to improve with an aim toward competing with the automobile, not just supplementing the automobile.

2. Comments on proposed criteria.

Add "Transferability" to the Effectiveness cluster of Advanced Evaluation Criteria.

Metropolitan traffic congestion is a global problem. **One of the signs of a potentially effective solution to congestion here is the transferability of that solution to another city elsewhere in the world.** If the solution "plays well in Peoria," it has the potential to have a significant impact here as well. We could define a "theory of transferability": **The reciprocity implied by transferability suggests that the most powerful transportation planning solutions will be those that have no particular geographic component, solutions that are not site specific.**

In addition, transferability implies affordability. A good solution will be affordable in, say, Mexico City or Bangkok. Cost is listed as one of the evaluation criteria for the TLWP, but its inclusion as a component of transferability has a much different connotation vs. cost as a separate component in isolation from the global community. We can obviously afford solutions here that many other societies could not.

These considerations suggest that corridor construction projects have a high "yawn" factor vs. the global aspect of congestion. Proposed construction alternatives are site specific and expensive and thus have low transferability. Because they are not transferable, they are also unlikely to have much impact on congestion here. This finding reveals a paradox: **the best way to fix SR 520 congestion is to focus on solutions that do not involve SR 520.** The theory of transferability offers a very powerful strategic insight that needs to be carefully considered and explored as both a planning and an evaluation tool.

What about SOV restrictions that I propose? While the restriction is site specific, it is only weakly site specific, i.e., the restriction could be moved around relatively easily here or elsewhere. The restriction is also very inexpensive. We can conclude that **SOV restrictions have a relatively high level of transferability and would therefore be likely to contribute to a reduction in traffic congestion.**

What about designing a bus system that can go anywhere in five stops or less? Such a system is completely non-site specific. It is likely to be quite affordable since most societies already have buses and roadways. The most significant missing infrastructure component is a regional network of transit centers. A network of 100 transit centers could be built across the entire future Sound Transit service area for about \$2 billion. That is relatively inexpensive in our society, and would be significantly cheaper in most other societies. So we can conclude that this kind of bus system has a high transferability factor and would likely be an effective means of

reducing congestion here. Please note that my previous comments about improving the intrinsic quality of bus services also meet the test of transferability.

As you can see, transferability represents a kind of global mirror in which the likely effectiveness of any given proposed solution can be reflected and thereby evaluated. If it plays well in Peoria, it's likely to play well here as well. **Add "Transferability" to the Effectiveness cluster of Advanced Evaluation Criteria.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your hard work and thought.

Source: Hotline

Date of Comment: March 19, 2001

Subjects: HCT, public involvement, and project

Comment: John Peter of Friends of the Monorail left a message on the Trans-Lake voice mail. He would like to show his video titled "Why not monorail?" at the open houses this week. He believes we have a copy. John mentioned that he can bring a VCR, but would like to make sure that he has a place at the open house to set-up.

Source: E-mail

Date of Comment: March 20, 2001

Subjects: Impacts, mitigations/enhancements, and lid.

Comment: I am a resident of Hunts Point--unfortunately our view is of SR 520 not the water --Our home is to the south of SR 520--On Points Drive, between 84th and 88th. My concern is the increased pollution coming into our home--Electronic furnace filters need to be cleaned on a monthly basis--Asthma and Bronchitis are a chronic health issue. Home values on this side of the road have declined. I would like to see a lid on SR 520--from Bellevue Way to the Bridge Deck--or--Feel free to purchase our home for Road/Bridge improvements--A new larger Bridge is necessary--traffic isn't decreasing--we need to reach an agreement and get on with this--instead of lawyers tying this project up for years, wasting our tax dollars--
Thank You for your time

Source: E-mail

Date of Comment: March 20, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, HOV lanes, and HCT.

Comment: Trans-Lake Washington Project; Ladies and Gentlemen:
The distinction in your alternatives analysis between HOV and HCT (high capacity transit) lanes is questionable. Taking the LINK light rail as a surrogate for HCT, it's maximum *theoretical* seated capacity (assuming it would need to mesh with the planned north-south line) is: 15 trains per hour x 4 cars per train x 74 seats per car = 4440 seats per hour. The bus on HOV equivalent

is: $4440 \text{ seats per hour} / 64 \text{ seats per articulated bus} = 69.4 \text{ buses per hour}$, round to 70. There are 3600 seconds per hour: $3600 \text{ sec per hour} / 70 \text{ buses per hour} = 51 \text{ seconds per bus}$. This is easily obtainable, and far less than the maximum thorough-put of buses, which is indicated below. As a result, assuming you “raise the bar” as appropriate from HOV2 to HOV3 etc., buses on HOV have far **more** capacity than rail. Thus HOV is not an alternative to HCT, as your web site indicates, but rather a form of HCT. Please incorporate these comments in your public documents. Thank you.

“Capacity of a route or of a group of routes on the same facility is almost always determined by conditions at stops areas rather than line conditions. ... When stops are made off the main line or artery, capacity is determined by the safe separation between transit units. Thus, on exclusive bus ways or bus lanes on freeways, with off-line bus stops, headways of 5 [seconds] can be achieved. Theoretically rail systems could operate at headways of perhaps 60 [seconds] under similar conditions, but such situations are not found in practice”

Observed bus capacities: I-495, New York: 490 / hour; Lincoln Tunnel, New York: 735 / hour (1994 ITE Highway Capacity Manual, p. 193)

Bus-only lane theoretical maximum: Using 7 seconds per articulated bus (vs. the observed 5 seconds above)

$3600 \text{ sec per hour} / 7 \text{ sec per bus} = 514 \text{ buses per hour}$

$514 \text{ buses per hour} \times 64 \text{ seats per bus} = 32,896 \text{ seats per hour}$

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/translake/>

Source: E-mail

Date of Comment: March 20, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, HCT, and project.

Comment: Trans-Lake staff:

I have some questions about the Modal Evaluation documents prepared for the recent Technical and Advisory committee meetings. Ideally, I would like to speak directly to somebody who was involved in the preparation of the reports, if possible.

In particular, the High Capacity Transit document mentions that it assumes that the technology chosen will have similar characteristics to a light rail system; for many of the alternative technologies being investigated, this is not at all the case, and I would like to see additional forecasts prepared which take some of these differences into account.

Also, I would very much like to know the specific assumptions regarding station spacing and maximum speed that were used to calculate the ridership estimates in section 1.2. Thanks

Source: E-mail

Date of Comment: March 21, 2001

Subjects: Alternatives, general-purpose lanes, HCT, and transit.

Comment: I support building two additional car lanes each way on the 520 crossing. In fact, having lived in San Diego for several years recently, I would support even more lanes. Most urban freeways in San Diego have 6 lanes each way. My occasional trips from northeast to

southwest San Diego at 5 PM were made at no less than 50 MPH and often at 70! More lanes DO work. Mass transit is good, but don't neglect single occupant cars, or we will be breathing their exhaust as they sit there looking at empty HOV lanes.
